

REMARKS

Claims 1-16 have been examined: claims 1-7 and 13-16 stand rejected and claims 8-12 are indicated as containing allowable subject matter. By the above amendments, claims 1, 9 and 10 have been amended, and claim 8 has been canceled. Accordingly, claims 1-7 and 9-16 now are pending in the subject application. Favorable reconsideration of the application and allowance of all of the pending claims are respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

As a preliminary matter, Applicant timely claimed foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. §119 to German Application No. DE 102 60 755.9, and filed a certified copy of this foreign priority document on February 17, 2004. The USPTO's PAIR system confirms that the certified copy was received. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to acknowledge Applicant's foreign priority claim and receipt of the certified copy in the next communication.

Claims 1-7 and 13-16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,573,027 to Imai.

The Examiner indicates that claims 8-12 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of their parent claims and any intervening claims.

Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of claim 8 (while claim 8 has been canceled). Accordingly, claim 1 includes subject matter that the Examiner has indicated is allowable. The Examiner is therefore requested to reconsider and withdraw this rejection to independent claim 1 as well as to dependent claims 2-7 and 13-16.

In view of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to find the application to be in condition for allowance with claims 1-7 and 9-16. However, if for any reason the Examiner feels that the application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is respectfully requested to call the undersigned attorney to discuss any unresolved issues and to expedite the disposition of the application.

Applicant hereby petitions for any extension of time that may be necessary to maintain the pendency of this application. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge payment of

any additional fees required for the above-identified application or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 05-0460.

Dated: April 17, 2007

Respectfully submitted by:

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